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REFERENCES

Halle: Zentrum fur USA-Studien der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, 2010. ISBN 978-3-00-032980-7

1 To celebrate its 15th anniversary, the Halle-Wittenberg Center for United States Studies has published a 'showcase' of their work in the field of American Studies, with the aim of 'spreading innovative approaches to American Studies in Germany.' In 2010, the enlarged and thoroughly revised edition of the 53rd issue of the American Studies Journal (AJS), “Lincoln's Legacy: Nation Building, Democracy and the Question of Race and Civil Rights” appeared, edited by Hans-Jürgen Grabbe, Professor of American and British Studies and Director of the Center for United States Studies at Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg. The specific focus of this publication was the “implications of [Lincoln's] presidency on the United States and the world” (9), addressed according to the themes of nation building, democratic development, race relations and civil rights. The articles focus on Lincoln's legacy by exploring various historical and literary sources, including Lincoln's speeches and personal letters, the shifting image of Lincoln in American schoolbooks, and narratives of the Civil War in American literature. Three articles were also added to the original ASJ 53 issue which discuss the image of Lincoln in film. These articles, taken together, present a substantial analysis of the implications of Lincoln's presidency for the American nation and the world at large and, in turn, engage with the debates triggered by his legacy as the Great Emancipator.

2 “Abraham Lincoln's Attitudes on Slavery and Race,” a contribution by Jörg Nagler, presents an analysis of Lincoln's attitudes, both private and political, on slavery and race. Nagler, Professor of American History at Friedrich Schiller University, goes beyond merely exploring the inconsistencies between the attitudes of the private and the political Lincoln, in order to consider the development and evolution of his views. For Nagler, “the private person and the political Lincoln went through changes regarding the position towards the question of slavery and race, a development that might seem difficult to dismantle at times” (30). Nagler is able to address this development by considering particular influential moments of Lincoln’s biography. One biographical circumstance that Nagler explores is Lincoln's participation in the Congressional Senate Elections in Illinois, which took place in the fall of 1858. During the series of seven debates between Frederick Douglas and Lincoln, the focus of which was the central question of the expansion of slavery and the future of race relations, Lincoln expressed a “radicalization in his thinking concerning the future of slavery.” In his now famous House Divided Speech, Lincoln stated: “I do not expect the Union to be dissolved – I do not expect the House to fall – but I do expect it will cease to be divided” (19). This radicalization is presented as a reaction to a number of circumstances including the Dred Scott Decision of the Supreme Court in 1857. Nagler views this decision as having led Lincoln to speak publicly of a “‘Southern conspiracy’ that worked to expand the system of slavery and thereby endanger [...] the ideals of the Founding Fathers” (19). In this fashion, Nagler examines various biographical details in his article, and looks at how they worked to both form and develop Lincoln's attitudes. Nagler also points out, regarding the exploration of Lincoln's private versus public views and attitudes, that there are historiographical limitations. While there are numerous historical sources available pertaining to Lincoln's political stance, such as speeches and commentaries, there are fewer sources reflecting his personal views and attitudes towards African Americans and race relations. Thus, Nagler acknowledges the difficulties in attempting to explore Lincoln's private views and states that, as a result it is often difficult to “differentiate between personal attitudes and public political agitation” (12).

3 David Goldfield’s article, “Evangelical Religion and Evangelical Democracy: Lincoln's Legacy,” examines the problematic nature of mixing religion and politics, whereby “political issues bec[o]me moral issues and, therefore more difficult to deal within the political process” (35). In order to explore this thesis, Goldfield, like Nagler, engages with Lincoln's House Divided speech. Goldfield focuses his analysis of the speech on its evident religious undertones. In turn, he establishes links with Lincoln's religious sensibilities more broadly, their effect on Lincoln's political thought, and the consequences of such engagements. Goldfield initially highlights the Biblical nature of the House Divided speech by quoting Matthew 12:25 and noting the similarities in the imagery employed: “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand” (44). This use of religious imagery in Lincoln's speeches may at first seem paradox to his secularism, but Goldfield points out that it was “commonplace at the time for Americans... to quote freely from Biblical texts or allude to Biblical themes” (39). Affected by the death of his son in 1849, such use of religious imagery can be seen as signalling the emergence of Lincoln's religious sensibilities. These sensibilities, when paired with the controversy over the extension of slavery in the territories, marked the transcendence of the status of slavery in Lincoln's eyes from merely a political issue to a religious, social and moral one. This assertion, signalled that

the nation was "now approaching a crossroads," at the outset of the civil war. Not only was there a "secular divide, but [the forthcoming] battle [...] could determine the future of mankind for eternity" (45). Slavery was indeed a moral issue, but Goldfield posits that "in the volatile mixture of religion and politics, a democratic society could not contain the politics of God." Goldfield presents Lincoln in this regard as having contributed to a civil war which "underscored the implications of dividing issues and people into the 'saved and the damned'." Goldfield simultaneously acknowledges, however, Lincoln's "wonderful ability to capture in rhetoric what the American people were thinking" (48).

4 A further article by Goldfield differs from the previous articles in its engagement with Lincoln's legacy. Rather than exploring the views or attitudes of Lincoln himself or the direct consequences of his political career upon America, Goldfield provides an analysis of Lincoln's changing image in American schoolbooks over time. This analysis aims at exploring how changing portrayals of Lincoln "reflect the shifting political and social landscape of American society" (51). Such an approach is indeed thought-provoking and highlights the dynamic nature of history in schoolbooks, which Goldfield contends "always serves a contemporary purpose" (61).

5 The dynamic nature of history and the shifting image of Lincoln as a historical figure are also at issue in "Fiction as Re-construction of History: Narratives of the Civil War in American Literature." In this article, Reinhard Isensee explores the significance of the Civil War for the cultural imagination of the United States. By looking at fictional representations of the Civil War, Isensee points out the strong and ongoing fascination with this period in America's history. As that period is ever more remote from current history, however, Isensee shows that there have been an increasing number of controversies regarding the "representation and evaluation of this war as a fundamental matrix for the self-perception of American society" (63). By presenting readings of selected novels, including Stephen Crane's *Red Badge of Courage*, Isensee explores the use of the American Civil War as a literary theme and foregrounds its representation in literary works as re-evaluations of a historical conflict within the framework of current debates pertaining to definitions of American culture(s). Such an engagement with fictional representations of historical events and figures, as well as Goldfield's engagement with their representation in schoolbooks, highlight Lincoln's inadvertent role in the ongoing process of the production of national identity. Thus both Isensee and Goldfield clearly underscore Lincoln's legacy in regards to both nation building and democratic development.

6 The final three articles of the collection are presented under the thematic heading of History and Literature in Film. As the title of this subsection indeed suggests, these articles provide both general and specific discussions of issues pertaining to the representation of history and literature in film. The first article entitled: "The Social and Cultural Construction of Abraham Lincoln in U.S. Movies and on U.S. TV," explores the role of Lincoln in the popular American imaginary, and particularly in the "common, shifting ground of their popular, visual and digital imagination" (81). Such an exploration is indeed ambitious, considering the scope of Lincoln's portrayal in film and television. The author John Dean points out that "[m]ost scholars of modern American mass media agree that 'Lincoln is the most frequently portrayed American historical figure in the history of film and television arts'" (81). Dean divides his study into two sections, one of which deals specifically with America, while the second explores both Heroism Studies more broadly and Lincoln's heroism as portrayed in film and television more particularly.

Such a layout allows Dean to present the effects of Lincoln's posthumous representation on the average American's sense of national and personal identity, in a clear and concise manner and the article does not become overwhelmed by the vast scope of its subject matter.

7 Dean's next essay, “The Mechanics of Books versus the Mechanics of Movies,” offers a short outline of how books and movies are made, with the premise that '[a]n end product is the result of a process' (153). While supplementing Dean's previous article, this addition may at first seem a bit disjointed from the rest of the collection as it does not directly deal with Lincoln's legacy. Its addition, however, provides an insight into the particular nature of American publishing and film production, which may in turn assist in the further analysis of Lincoln's portrayal in film and television. Together with Dean's previous article, it offers a view of popular culture as the iteration and reiteration of certain narratives.

8 Christine Meissner's contribution, entitled “Teaching American History and the Movie *Amistad* (1997)” provides an example of how to prepare students for their study of the Civil War and the events leading to the Emancipation Proclamation. Unlike traditional methods of classroom introduction to a particular topic, Meissner proposes that students approach these events through the study of film, and particularly through the study of the movie *Amistad*. She posits that because *Amistad* engages with the topic of slavery from both an emotional and legal viewpoint, it offers an interesting trigger for discussion. The author offers various pre-, while- and post-viewing assignments that will enable closer study of both the film and the historical period. This article provides an adept conclusion to the collection, pairing together the ongoing study of the historical period in which Lincoln lived and the exploration of his legacy, through the study of the medium of film.

9 *Lincoln's Legacy: Nation Building, Democracy and the Question of Race and Civil Rights* clearly accomplishes its aim of exploring the implications of Lincoln's presidency. The articles in this collection engage with aspects of Lincoln's legacy pertaining to nation building, democratic development, race relations and civil rights. In its emphasis in engaging with posthumous representations of Lincoln, particularly in novels and film, new avenues for exploring Lincoln's role in the construction of American personal and national identity are opened.

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